

Abdulhadi al-Khawaja (m)

Adoption Status: Not Adopted

Country: Bahrain

Occupation: Well-known human rights defender for more than twenty years. Until February 2011, al-Khawaja worked as a regional coordinator for the international organization Front Line Defenders.



Detained Since: April 9, 2011

Charges: Financing and participating in terrorism to overthrow the government, as well as spying for a foreign country.

Sentence: On June 22, 2011, al-Khawaja was sentenced to life imprisonment. On January 7, 2013, Bahrain's highest appeals court upheld al-Khawaja's conviction and life sentence.

Additional: Just before his current detention, Mr. al-Khawaja had publically criticized the regime's brutal response to the anti-government protests in Bahrain. Early on April 9, 2011, fifteen masked men stormed into al-Khawaja's apartment, breaking down the door with a sledgehammer and beat al-Khawaja until he lost consciousness. He was taken into custody along with his two sons-in-law. Authorities held him incommunicado for several weeks and tortured him.

al-Khawaja has suffered four fractures to his face, requiring a four hour surgery to repair his jaw as a result of beating by security guards. He has also been subjected to sexual and psychological torture. On February 8, 2012, al-Khawaja began a hunger strike to protest his wrongful detention and treatment in prison. He ended his hunger strike after 110 days on May 30, 2012. During his hunger strike, al-Khawaja's health deteriorated and he reportedly lost 22 pounds.

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